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## **County Board Approves 2002-2007 Highway Program**

WAUKEGAN, IL – The Lake County Division of Transportation released its \$181 million plan for maintenance and improvements to the county highway system over the next five-years, which the Public Works and Transportation Committee endorsed at its meeting June 26<sup>th</sup>.

Lake County's 2002-2007 Highway improvement program divides programs into three major categories. System preservation projects, which keep highways in good condition. System modernization projects reduce traffic bottlenecks, and system expansion projects increase highway capacity to meet growth demands.

"The county is falling behind in the ability to mitigate traffic congestion. As growth and development occur in the county, travel increases on county highways," said Lake County Board Member and Public Works and Transportation Committee Chair Diana O'Kelly. "Road improvements needed to increase capacity for growth have not kept pace."

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As a result of worsening congestion on county highways, the Lake County Division of Transportation made the largest funding allocation to system expansion projects, which account for 47% of the program. System preservation projects comprise another 35%, and system modernization projects make-up the remaining 18% of the programs projects.

According to Lake County Director of Transportation/County Engineer Marty Buehler, “The Lake County Board made improving the county transportation system one of its highest priorities because maintaining and improving the county’s highway system is essential for a healthy local economy, a good environment and for the efficient movement of goods and people.”

Among the projects desired by the Lake County Board and outlined in the Division of Transportation’s Highway Improvement Program are projects to: improve traffic flow, improve the quality of county roads, develop viable transportation options, develop regional bike path systems and improve coordination on roads and highways with legislators, the Illinois Department of Transportation and municipalities.

The five-year highway improvement program is the scheduling component of the county’s long-range transportation plan. By law, Marty Buehler, the County Engineer, is required to prepare a five-year highway improvement program before July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. The program serves as a document for the submission of requested budgets for the next fiscal year.

At its June meeting, the Lake County Board adopted the ‘Lake County 2020 Transportation Priority Program,’ which outlines Lake County transportation needs through the year 2020 for county roadways, mass transit and a trunk bikeway system. This plan will serve as Lake County’s long range transportation plan and will replace the existing 2005 version, which has been in place since 1990.